



Working with Families:
Tips for Effective Communication and Strategies for Challenging Situations
Scenarios and Discussion Questions

Wednesday, January 30, 2013

Scenarios

1. A nursing home Administrator, Ms. Jones, calls you stating a family member, Ms. Daniels, is difficult to work with, complains often and is never pleased with the solution the facility offers to resolve her complaints. Ms. Jones also says the staff members are not comfortable assisting the resident (Ms. Daniels' father), because Ms. Daniels often yells at the staff. Ms. Jones also states that the resident is pleased with his care and does not agree with the complaints of his daughter. The Administrator asks you to speak with Ms. Daniels.

- What are your concerns?
- Since the Administrator asked you to speak with the family member, what do you say and do in order to avoid being perceived as "on the facility's side" when you speak with Ms. Daniels?
- Write down a few statements you would make when speaking with the facility, Ms. Daniels and the resident.

2. Mr. Smith is still upset about an incident regarding the care of his mother that occurred in the past and was discussed with the staff at the time of the incident. Reminders of this incident are triggered each time Mr. Smith has a concern about the care of his mother. Mr. Smith brings up the past incident every time he speaks with facility staff (even if the past incident isn't related to his current concern). When he refers back to the prior incident it upsets the staff – many of whom were not working at the facility at the time of the prior incident. Mr. Smith requests your assistance in addressing his current concerns about his mother's care.

- What do you do?
- What are your concerns?
- Write down a few statements you would make when speaking with Mr. Smith and his mother.

3. Ms. Garcia is her mother's health care agent (per the health care power of attorney) and contacts you with concerns about her mother's care. You visit her mother to see if she shares her daughter's concerns and if she would like you to take any action. However, after your conversation, you are not sure about the resident's decision-making capacity and her wishes. You are not clear whether you should be guided by the resident or her daughter since Ms. Garcia is the designated health care agent.

- What do you do?
- What are your concerns?
- Write down a few statements you would make when speaking with Ms. Garcia.

Discussion Questions

1. When providing information to family members for self-advocacy, what is the Ombudsman role in ensuring that the resident's wishes are respected? Do you have a process for determining which questions or situations require providing only information and consultation versus questions or issues that trigger the need to speak with the resident to ensure that the resident's voice is not overruled by the family member?
2. A family member, who is also the President of the Family Council, is not pleased with the outcome of a complaint you assisted her with and she is telling other family members in the facility that the LTCOP is powerless and not effective in resolving complaints. What do you do?
3. Avoiding actual and perceived conflict of interest is critical in order to have an effective LTCOP. Have you ever been accused of "being on the side of the facility" due to a family member's perception of conflict of interest? If so, how did you respond? What steps do you take to prevent a perception of conflict of interest?